

LD 4609
.C2

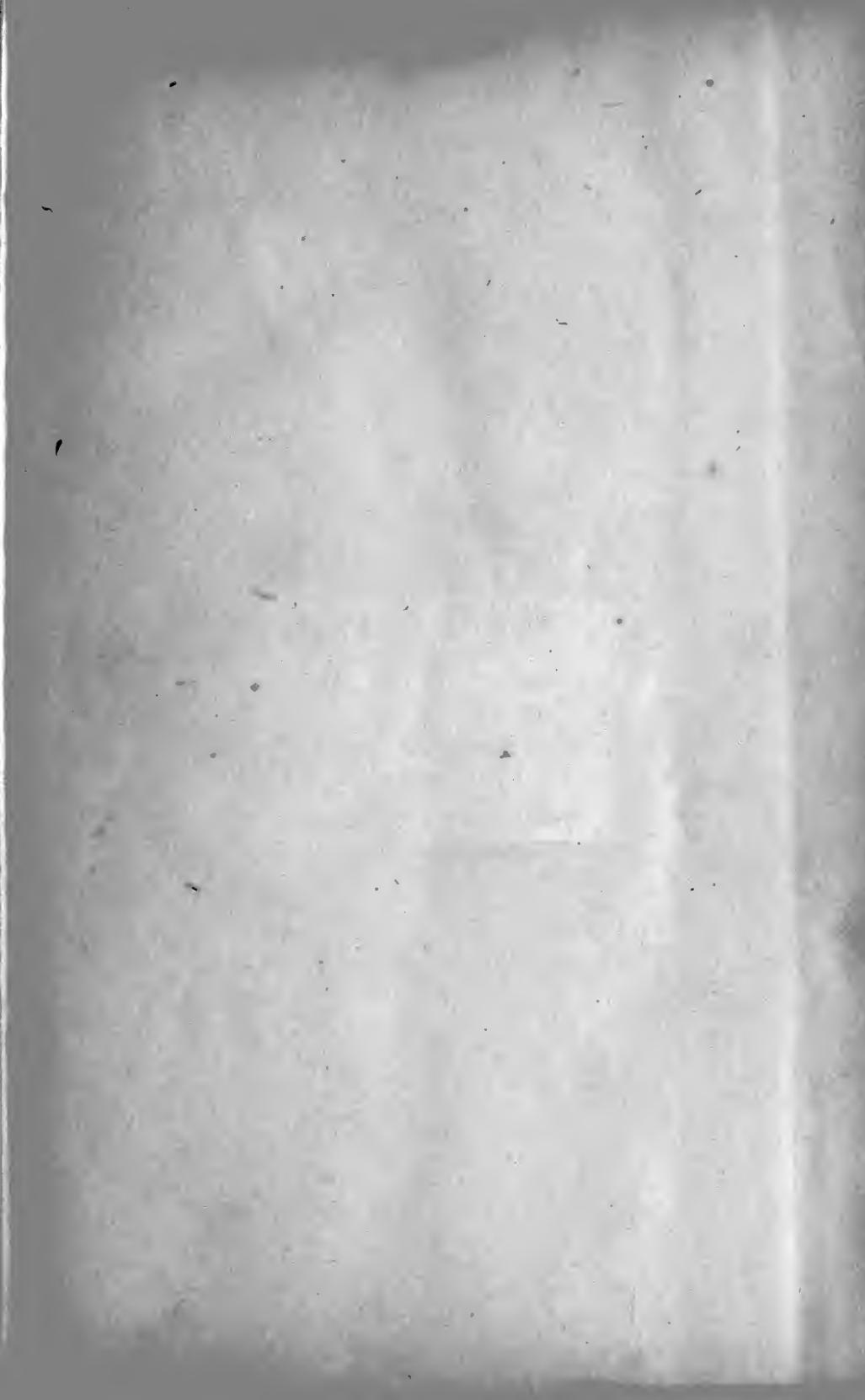
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap. L II 4609

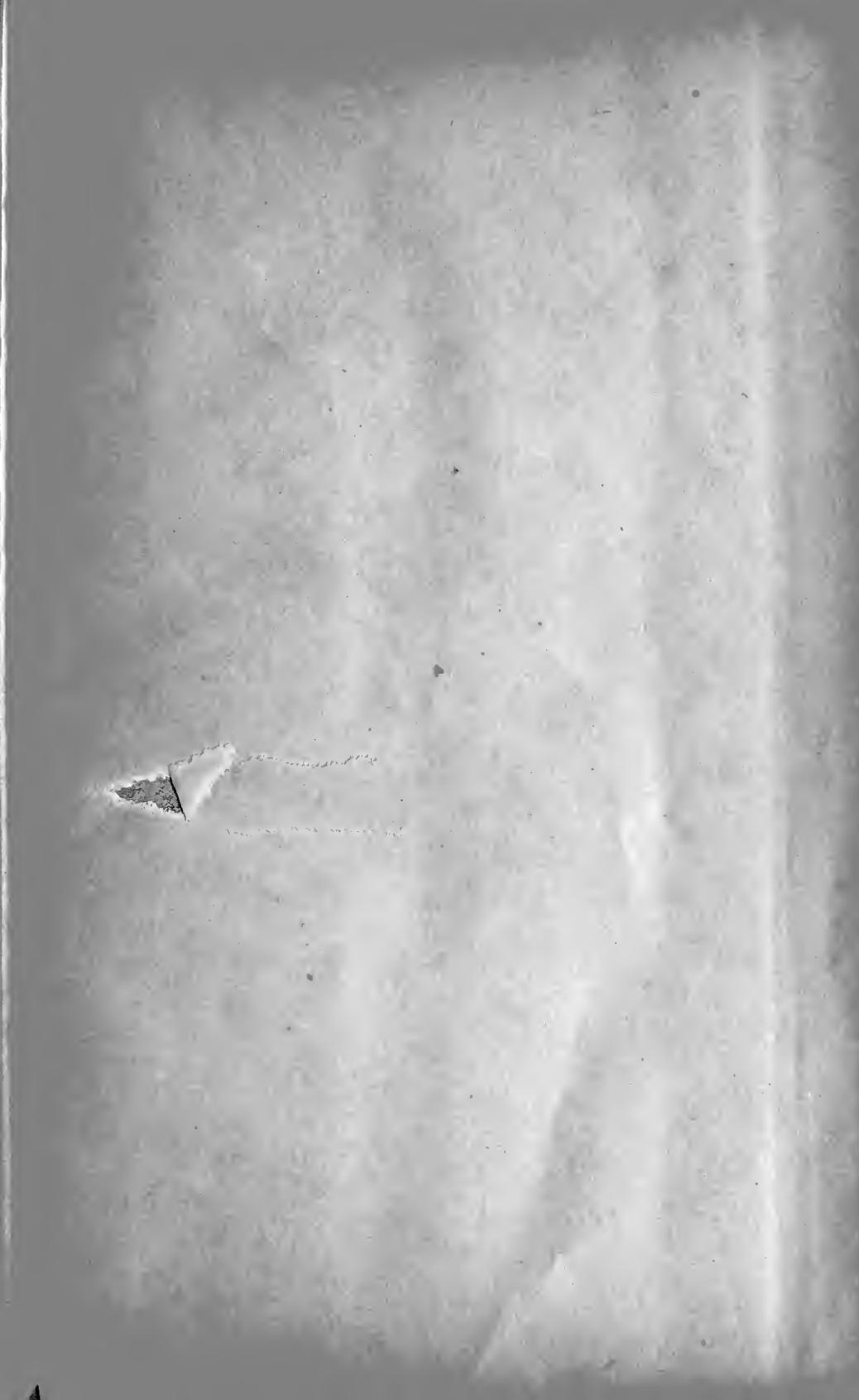
Shelf C 2

PRESENTED BY

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.









*Compliments of
the Author.*

JONATHAN DICKINSON

AND

THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY,

OR

The Rise of Colleges in America ;

AN HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN THE

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ELIZABETH,

SUNDAY, JANUARY 25TH, 1880,

BY

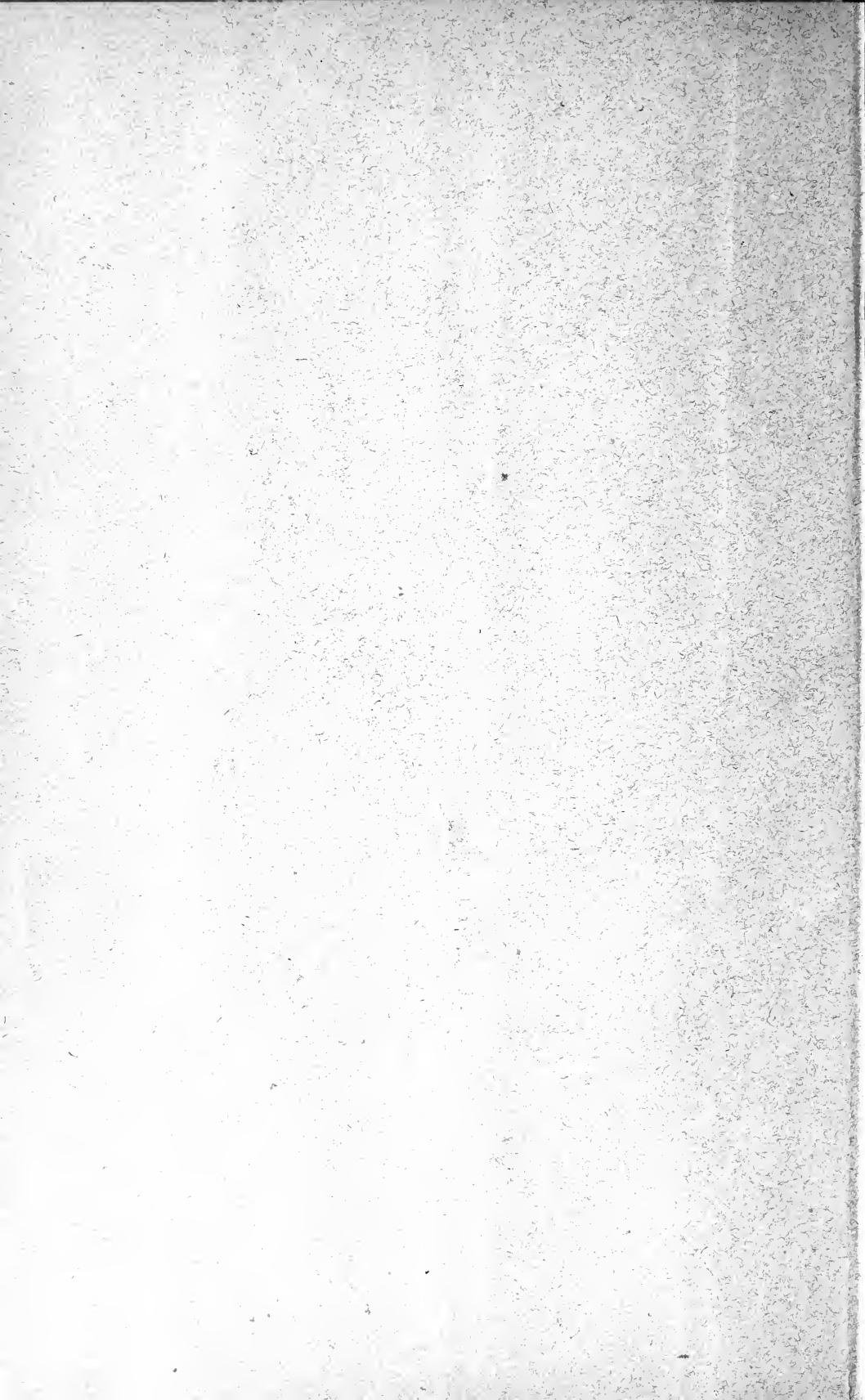
HENRY C. CAMERON, D.D.,

PROFESSOR IN THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY.

PRINCETON, N. J.:

PRINTED BY C. S. ROBINSON & CO.

1880.



JONATHAN DICKINSON
AND
THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY,

OR
The Rise of Colleges in America;

AN HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN THE

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ELIZABETH,

SUNDAY, JANUARY 25TH, 1880,

BY

HENRY C. CAMERON, D.D.,

PROFESSOR IN THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY.



PRINCETON, N. J.:
PRINTED BY C. S. ROBINSON & CO.
1880.

L D⁴⁶⁰⁹
C²

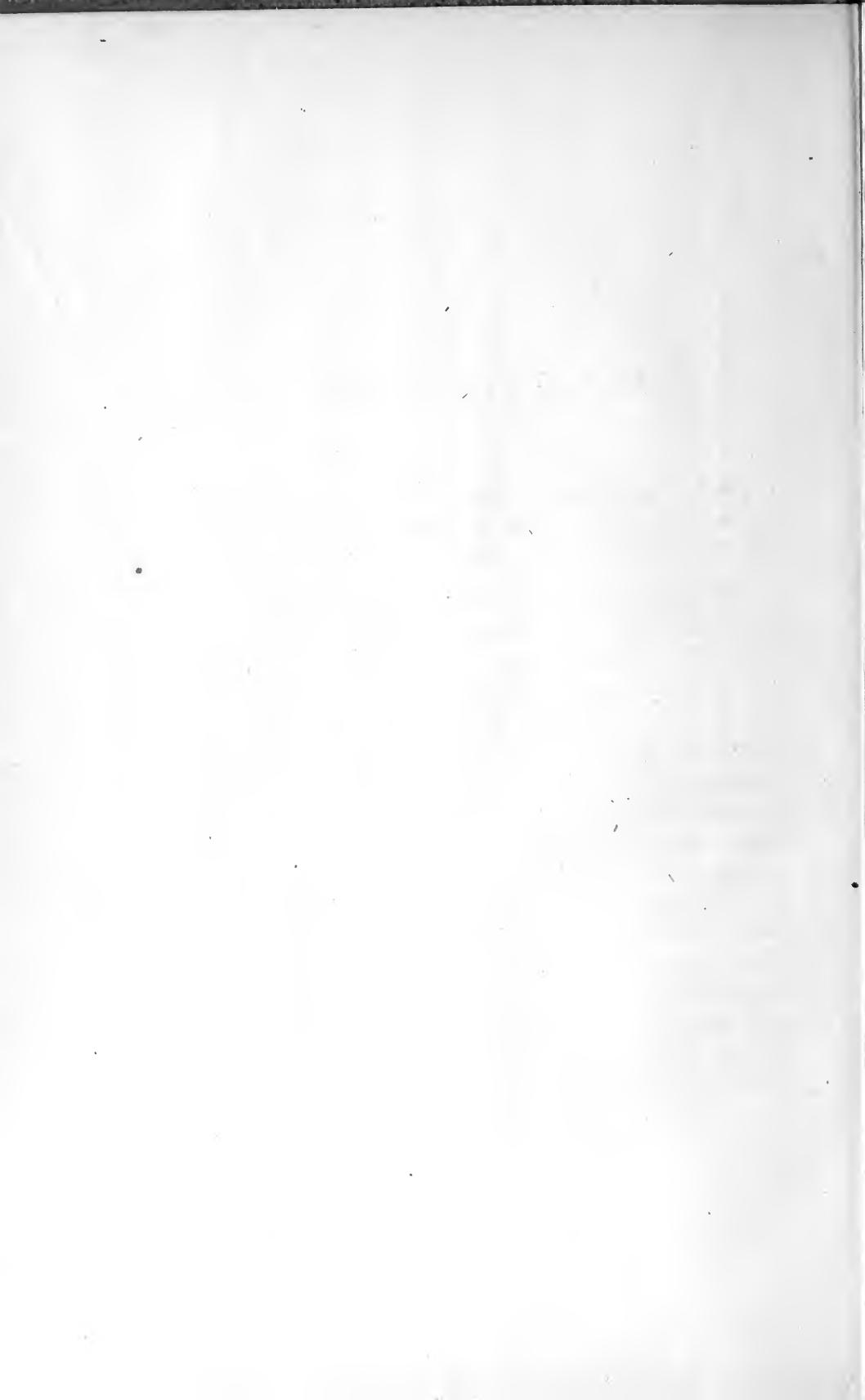
PREFATORY NOTICE.

The Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Elizabeth, N. J., determined to commemorate, by appropriate services, the one hundredth anniversary of the burning of their church in the War of the Revolution. As the first President of the College of New Jersey had been a pastor of this church, the Faculty of the College were requested to appoint some one to deliver a discourse upon "Jonathan Dickinson and the College of New Jersey." The Faculty, at their meeting, January 16, 1880, adopted the following resolution:

"*Resolved*, That Professor Henry C. Cameron, D.D., be requested as the representative of the College to deliver the address referred to."

In compliance with this request a discourse upon "Jonathan Dickinson and the College of New Jersey," or "The Rise of Colleges in America," was preached in the church at Elizabeth, on the morning of Sunday, January 25th, 1880. In the evening, the Rev. E. Kempshall, D.D., the pastor of the church, delivered a discourse upon "Caldwell and the Revolution."

Instead of publishing the "portion relating particularly to Jonathan Dickinson and the College of New Jersey," as requested by the Trustees of the Church, it has been deemed best to publish the entire discourse. Although hastily prepared it is the result of considerable historical investigation. For the facts the author is indebted mainly to Bancroft's History of the United States, Motley's Rise of the Dutch Republic and The United Netherlands, Hodge's Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church, Webster's History of the Presbyterian Church, Alexander's Log College, Sprague's Annals of the Presbyterian Church, Green's Discourses (Notes to), Murray's Handbook, Hetherington's History of the Church of Scotland, Bozman's History of Maryland, Campbell's History of Virginia, Maclean's History of the College of New Jersey, Hatfield's History of Elizabeth, N. J., besides numerous pamphlets and biographies.



DISCOURSE.

That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born ; who should arise and declare them to their children.—Psalm lxxviii. 6.

All of you who have visited our National Capitol will recall the most beautiful picture that adorns the walls of the rotunda. The scene is laid in the little harbor of Delfshaven in Holland. Upon the deck of the small ship kneel a little band of exiles, most of whom were about to tempt the stormy Atlantic, and to seek in a new world, amid hostile savages, that liberty to worship God according to their conscience which was denied them in their native land. Here were their pastor, John Robinson, “a man not easily to be paralleled,” with open Bible and face uplifted to heaven in prayer ; and Wm. Brewster, their ruling elder; and John Carver, destined to be their first governor ; and Wm. Bradford, his successor and the historian of the future colony ; and Edward Winslow ; and the gallant soldier, Miles Standish with his wife Rose, beautiful as an angel, her hand resting upon his shoulder, and her face touched with the light and joy of heaven.

Twelve years before this scene was enacted a company of earnest Christians had fled from England and sought a resting place in Holland, where they had "heard was freedom of religion for all men." But "they knew they were PILGRIMS, and looked not much on those things [their trials, &c.], but lifted up their eyes to heaven, their dearest country, and quieted their spirits." Although they had gained the favor of their Dutch protectors, and their diligent labor supplied their modest wants, a longing for a wider field of action stirred within them, and the patriotism still lingering in their breasts made them restless to live once more under the government of their native land. I need not trace for you the history of these men, of their efforts to gain permission to form a colony in this western land, until at last "moved by a hope and inward zeal of advancing the gospel of the kingdom of Christ in the remotest parts of the New World, and animated with the purpose of enlarging the dominions of their beloved mother-country, to whom their hearts ever turned despite her unkindness, they were now ready to accomplish their purpose." The story of their voyage, their sufferings, their settlement, their entire career, is familiar to you all.

The landing of these Pilgrims upon Plymouth Rock is an epoch in our history no less than that earlier settlement at Jamestown. They brought with them not only the principles of liberty and religion, but also the notion of popular education. Where had they obtained this notion? Not in Eng-

land, whence this " poor persecuted flock of Christ " had fled. They had spent years in a country which not only loved liberty and religion, was republican and Protestant, but in a city which had displayed its love for learning in a most remarkable manner. Let us recall an event in this city of Leyden. In 1573-74 it was besieged by the Spaniards under Valdez. The heroism and endurance of its citizens have never been surpassed. When summoned to surrender, their commander John Vanderdoes replied that "when provisions failed they would devour their left hands, reserving their right to defend their liberty." Months elapsed and famine was now upon them ; for seven weeks they had no bread within their walls, the flesh of horses and unclean animals and the grass from the streets had been their food. And now came pestilence following in the train of famine, and 6000 of the inhabitants were swept away. The survivors scarce had strength to bury the dead. And now William of Orange, that wise statesman and gallant warrior, determined to inundate his country that he might drive out the enemy and deliver this patriotic city. The dykes were cut ; but the plan failed, and relief could not reach the besieged. Driven frantic by suffering and disappointment they rushed tumultuously to their burgomaster, Peter A. Vanderwerf, and demanded bread or surrender. "I have sworn to defend this city," he answered, "and by God's help I mean to keep my oath. Bread I have none ; but if my body can afford you relief and enable you to prolong the defence, take it and

tear it to pieces, and let those who are most hungry among you share it." This noble devotion silenced them, and they retired. Relief came from God. A violent wind caused the sea to rush through the breaches in the dykes with such force as to inundate the whole land, to overthrow the ramparts of their enemies, and to overwhelm 1000 of the Spaniards with its power. Thus the city was delivered; and by a change in the wind the waters were again driven back to their place. And yet there are men who deny a superintending Providence.

And when the Prince of Orange wished to reward the people of Leyden for their bravery and their patriotism and their attachment to the cause of truth and Protestantism, what do you suppose they asked at his hands? Not relief from taxation, not deliverance from any civic burden, but the establishment of a University: and that Institution stands to-day, a monument of their virtues, a crown and an honor, and a means of usefulness to their posterity. It has produced some of the greatest scholars the world has ever known, and has probably done as much for the cause of science as any similar institution in the world. It was in this city and beneath the shadows of this University that the pilgrim fathers acquired their love of learning. From Holland, where the school ever stands hard by the church, and not from England, came the idea of the common school, which, cherished by New England, has extended far and wide in our land.

"To the end that learning may not be buried in the graves of our forefathers," it was ordered in all Puritan colonies, that "every township, after the Lord hath increased them to the number of fifty householders, shall appoint one to teach all children to write and read, and when any town shall increase to the number of one hundred families, they shall set up a grammar school; the masters thereof being able to instruct youth so far as they may be fitted for the University."

In 1636 the General Court of Massachusetts voted a sum equal to a year's rate of the whole colony, towards the erection of a College; and in 1638 the Rev. John Harvard, who died shortly after his arrival in the Colony, left the College one-half of his estate and all his library. Thus was founded Harvard College, the oldest of our Colleges, of which the Rev. Henry Dunster became the first president in 1640.

The next was the College of William and Mary, among the Cavaliers of Virginia, as the other had been among the Puritans of Massachusetts. It may here be remarked that the first attempt to found a College in this country was in Virginia, and that before the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock. I may be pardoned for alluding to this fact in the history of my native state.

The first Legislative Assembly that ever met in America was that of Virginia in 1619. A proposition was made in that body for the erection and support of a College, but unfortunately the great massacre by the Indians in 1622 led to the abandon-

ment of the enterprise. Another act in reference to the college was passed by the Assembly of Virginia in 1660, but the opposition of the royal governor caused the attempt to fail, although it was intended to promote piety and supply an able and faithful ministry.

In 1671, Sir Wm. Berkeley, the Governor, writes : "I thank God there are no free schools nor printing; and I hope we shall not have these hundred years." But in 1692 a charter was granted by William and Mary for the establishment of a College at Williamsburg in Virginia, which bears their names, and to which they gave land and revenues. The Rev. James Blair was its first president. The first building was destroyed by fire, and the second, erected in 1705 from designs by Sir Christopher Wren, has like Nassau Hall, been twice burned and twice restored with its original walls still standing.

The feeling that led to the establishment of these two colleges pervaded all parts of the colonies. It again manifested itself in New England, and Yale College was the result. In 1647, only nine years after the founding of Harvard, the people of New Haven had undertaken to establish a college; but the enterprise was abandoned out of deference to the interests of Cambridge. But in 1700, a company of ministers met in New Haven to form a College association. Shortly after, these ten ministers (another was subsequently added,) met at Branford, each member of the association bringing a number of books and laying them upon a table

with the declaration : "I give these books for the founding a college in this colony." A charter was granted by the General Court in 1701. This college was at first intended to be especially theological, but the plan was modified to the design of instructing youth in the arts and sciences, who may be fitted for public employment both in Church and Civic State." A religious test (the Saybrook Platform,) was required from all its officers. Its pupils were taught and its commencements were held at various places until it was finally located at New Haven. The Rev. Abram Pierson was its first President, and it received its name from Elihu Yale, its most liberal benefactor.

These three institutions may be said to have had a purely English origin and represented two distinct forms of religion, the Congregational and the Episcopcal. There was this difference however, and it is rather remarkable in view of the strict Puritan character of the Massachusetts Colony and of the circumstances under which Connecticut was settled, that Harvard was more independent and liberal than Yale, which was denominational from the very outset.

But there was another important element both among the people and the religion of the colonies that was as yet unrepresented. This was the Scotch and the Scotch Irish, the great Presbyterian element of the infant land. And here, I must allude to that providence of God which preserved this country not merely for Protestantism, but for that form of it which

is its highest and grandest form, the Calvinistic. Roman Catholic settlements were formed in the North and in the South. Mexico and South America were given up to them, but they barely touched the extremities of what now constitutes the United States, in Canada, Florida and Louisiana with their missions in the Mississippi valley. The Puritans, strict Calvinists, settled New England ; the Dutch, devoted to Calvinism in its highest form, settled New York ; Puritans and Presbyterians settled East Jersey ; the Scotch and the Scotch Irish poured into the Middle and Southern colonies from New Jersey to the Carolinas, and were of course Calvinistic. So the Swedes of Delaware, the Germans in Pennsylvania and elsewhere (for Reformed and Lutheran agreed as to the doctrines of grace,) and the Huguenots of South Carolina were of the same faith. And even the Church of England that prevailed in Virginia and elsewhere was Calvinistic in its articles, while Methodism had not yet sprung into existence. Thus from Massachusetts to Georgia, Calvinistic Protestantism everywhere prevailed, save among the settlements by the Friends in West Jersey and Pennsylvania and in the Roman Catholic colony in Maryland. Without detracting in the least from the liberal character of Lord Baltimore we must remember that the Charter of Maryland was granted by a *Protestant* Monarch, who would not allow his co-religionists to be oppressed, and that he had provided that the ordinances of the Province "be not repugnant nor contrary * * to the laws, statutes or rights of our

kingdom of England," and that no interpretation of the Charter "be made, whereby God's holy and true Christian religion, * * may in any wise suffer by change, prejudice, or diminution." From one end of the colonies to the other, the doctrinal type of Protestantism in the earlier times was almost uniform, the differences referring mainly to church order. Before the end of the 17th century 200,000 Scotch and Scotch Irish had immigrated into this land; and but for the intense love of their native land, the persecution of the Covenanters, "in the killing time," under Claverhouse, would have almost depopulated Scotland. Had all the descendants of Presbyterians in this land remained true to the faith of their ancestors and not imparted so much of their strength and vitality to other denominations, Presbyterians would to-day constitute one-half of the people of this country. As it is, by reason of their steadfast adherence to truth, their intelligence, their strength of character and their enlightened zeal, they are the greatest religious power in this land.

In most parts of the colonies the Presbyterians had much to contend with. Congregationalism was established by law in New England, the Friends were in Pennsylvania and West Jersey; in the other colonies generally the Church of England was favored in all respects by the royal Governors. Hence the difficulty experienced by Presbyterian ministers in the earliest days. They were imprisoned in New York and elsewhere for preaching the Gospel, and only occasionally did a royal governor

(like Lieut. Governor Gooch of Virginia,) have the courage to say that they were "not dissenters, but belonged to the Established Kirk of Scotland."

East New Jersey was settled by persons of New England origin, the earliest settlers of Elizabeth-town having come from the eastern end of Long Island and from Connecticut. They brought with them the idea of religious liberty. In the very first negotiation for a settlement "about the Raritan river," the deputation from New Haven to Gov. Stuyvesant insisted among other things upon liberty "to gather a church in the congregational way, such as they had enjoyed in New England about twenty years past." This and nearly all their other demands were conceded; but no settlement was made under the Dutch dominion. In the concessions to settlers made after the country came into the possession of the English, freedom of conscience was granted along with other terms calculated to encourage immigration. The founders of this town in 1664 were then of Puritan stock and brought with them their Puritan religion. The Rev. Abraham Pierson settled in Newark in 1667, and hither they were obliged to go for religious services for a few years. They soon erected a meeting house upon the site of this very building and organized a Christian church. The Rev. James Peck became the first pastor about 1668. All the early pastors, as was natural, were from New England, and were Independent or Congregational ministers. No Presbytery had been established; indeed there were no Presbyterian ministers as yet.

in the country. But the Scotch tide of immigration soon reached this town. Bancroft says, "A great many inhabitants of Scotland emigrated to New Jersey, and enriched American society with a valuable accession of virtue refined by adversity, and of piety invigorated by persecution." "Is it strange," says he, "that many Scottish Presbyterians of virtue, education and courage, blending a love of liberty with religious enthusiasm, came to East New Jersey in such numbers as to give to the rising commonwealth a character which a century and a half has not effaced?" The name "Scotch Plains," is derived from those who came to this town. Many of the proprietors of the colony were Presbyterians and sent over a considerable number of colonists of their own faith; and at last a Presbyterian Deputy was appointed to rule over them. Within a generation this Presbyterian element predominated over the Puritan, for both the church and the pastor united with the Presbytery of Philadelphia in 1717. And it is remarkable that subsequently it was claimed "that the first purchasers and associates [i. e. of this town,] did give the aforesaid Tract of Land, for the use of a Presbyterian Church, the record of which on or about the year 1719 was either lost or destroyed." In response to this claim your trustees (I believe,) now hold this lot of land from the free-holders.

Except those in this part of New Jersey our early ministers from Father Makemie and his colleagues down through a generation were chiefly

from Scotland and Ireland. Three-fourths of those who formed our Presbyteries (1705 et seqq.,) were from beyond the sea; about one-fourth from New England. But the assimilation between Independents and Presbyterians outside of New England was almost complete, and is not surprising. The former were thoroughly Calvinistic in doctrine, believed in the parity of the ministry, and had preserved the office of ruling elder. Their Association exercised nearly all the powers of the Presbytery and there existed the right of appeal. These are the essential elements of Presbyterian Church Government; and it was only in later times that the divergence became greater and more manifest.

What may be called the second generation of Presbyterian ministers, the Tennents, the Blairs, Pemberton, Dickinson, B~~urn~~ and others, were remarkable men. Their characters made a great impression not only upon the church, but upon the people, and they seemed raised up for a peculiar purpose. Rarely has the church, since the day of the Reformation, been in a lower condition in Great Britain and America than it was in the early part of the eighteenth century. Bishop Butler, the great author of the Analogy, says that in his day in England Christianity seemed to be regarded as a fable among all persons of discernment; religion had so far decayed in the nation since the return of the Stuarts and the exclusion of the non-conformists that it seemed to have lost its influence upon the minds of men. John Newton says, that before the rise of the

Methodists, "the doctrines of grace were seldom heard from the pulpit, and the life and power of religion were little known." Religion in Scotland was at a very low ebb and had been declining for nearly half a century. "Many of the moderate ministers regarded Christianity as merely an improved system of morality and their sermons were little more than moral essays." Yet there had been a few revivals in the West of Scotland, and that remarkable outpouring of God's Spirit at the kirk of Shotts occurred in 1730.

In New England there was defection from sound doctrine, and great decay as to the life and power of godliness. Edwards alludes to the tendency to Arminianism, and President Clap of Yale College is stated to have been the only Calvinist among the Trustees or the Faculty.

In the Presbyterian Church there was no prevalent error in doctrine, all the ministers adhered to the Westminster Confession, and were men of blameless lives. But there was general coldness and sluggishness with regard to religion, and this not merely among the people, but also among the ministers, some of whom may have been unacquainted with experimental religion.

But God in mercy revived his work simultaneously in the mother country and in the colonies. In Great Britain the revival began with John Wesley and his companions in the University of Oxford. Methodism then took its rise, and its power has extended throughout the world. The great thought

that filled the mind of John Wesley through his long life seemed to be the salvation of souls. With him was joined, at first, George Whitfield; but Wesley being an Arminian and Whitfield a Calvinist, they separated in 1740. Wherever Whitfield went with his burning eloquence multitudes were converted to God, and he was the instrument in the salvation of a countless number of souls. In our Church the great revival, as it has been termed, began at Freehold in this colony, under the ministration of Mr. John Tennent, 1730-32, and was continued until 1744 under his brother William, who gave a full account of this work in a letter to Mr. Prince of Boston. The revival then extended to Lawrence, Hopewell and Amwell. In August, 1739, the work manifested itself among the young people of Newark and continued with increasing power for months; then decaying, it again exhibited its force in 1741. Mr. Dickinson, the pastor of this church, preached in Newark and was greatly interested in the revival. Although he had faithfully preached the Gospel among his people, the results were not such as he hoped and prayed for. Whitfield preached in Elizabethtown, Nov. 19, 1739, to 700 people, but Mr. Dickinson could observe no saving effects from the sermon. In 1740 he himself preached a sermon to the young, and in the course of its delivery a sudden and deep impression visibly appeared upon the congregation in general. There were such tokens of a solemn and deep concern as he had never before seen in any congregation. "More

young people," he said, "came to him for direction in their spiritual condition in three months than within thirty years before." To the effects of that remarkable revival may be traced the character and reputation of Elizabeth for more than a century. May you prove yourselves not unworthy of your noble ancestry, and in cherishing the memory of your forefathers imitate their virtue and their high character!

There is not time to trace this revival throughout our church in this State and Pennsylvania. Throughout New England and especially in Virginia beyond our church was the hand of God manifest. In some parts of the country there were, doubtless, objectionable features; but the great aggregate results and the mighty influence for good exerted upon this whole country prove conclusively that it was "a wonderful display both of the power and the grace of God."

Upon this subject we have the testimony of Edwards, Cooper, Coleman and Bellamy in New England; of the Tennents, Blair, Dickinson and Davies in our church; and we know the doctrines taught were the doctrines of the Reformation, the doctrines of grace, which have been honored of God in the salvation of souls in all ages of the Church. It is not surprising that in the ardent desire for the conversion of sinners errors were committed. Itinerants and ministers from the churches in one Presbytery thrust themselves into the bounds of churches in another Presbytery against the wishes of the

pastors ; and earnest men were permitted to preach who were not properly qualified. In consequence of these evils the Synod of Philadelphia enacted a rule against itinerants, and another requiring all who had not received a diploma to be examined by a committee of the Synod, and if found qualified they were to receive a certificate that should be equivalent to a diploma. The Presbytery of New Brunswick protested against these rules, and repeatedly disregarded that in reference to the examination of candidates. The elder Tennent had established a school at Neshaminy in Pennsylvania, subsequently styled "the Log College," and a number of ministers had been trained there. Gilbert Tennent thought that the rule in reference to candidates was aimed at his father's school, while the majority of the Synod declared that they desired only to secure an adequately educated ministry. These controversies produced dissensions that ultimately led to the great schism in the Church. The New Brunswick Presbytery and especially Tennent and Blair were wrong in their censorious spirit and their condemnation of their brethren. Mr. Tennent's famous Nottingham Sermon upon "the danger of an unconverted ministry" was one of the chief causes of the Schism. The Synod perhaps acted unwisely in the way in which the majority met the charges of Tennent and his party and condemned the Presbytery of New Brunswick in 1741.

Mr. Dickinson, the pastor of this church, was Moderator of the Synod in 1742, and he with the

other members of the New York Presbytery endeavored for some years to produce a reconciliation; but their efforts were unsuccessful, and eventually two Synods were formed, that of Philadelphia and that of New York. The revival was thus the occasion of a division which lasted seventeen years. Opposition to the revival was the standing charge against the one party; but for the most part it was only opposition to extravagance and disorder. The other party was charged with slighting the importance of an educated ministry; but it was not learning that was disregarded, there was not confidence in the existing colleges; and they were opposed to the plan of the Synod establishing a Seminary. There was substantial agreement as to doctrines. "The great schism was not the result of conflicting views, either as to doctrine or church government. It was the result of alienation of feeling produced by the controversies relating to the revival."

The Old Synod had directed its attention to the matter of education. "The Log College" at Neshaminy had educated some of its most distinguished ministers. In 1739 an overture proposing the establishment of a school under the care of the Synod was unanimously approved, and it was determined to send two members of the standing Commission to Europe to prosecute the affair. The war between England and Spain prevented the execution of the purpose. In 1744 a school for gratuitous instruction in the languages, philosophy and divinity, was established for supplying vacancies in the

church. Trustees were appointed, and Mr. Alison, a most accomplished scholar and a leader in the church, was elected Master, and collections in the churches were ordered. This school gave rise to Newark Academy in Delaware, since chartered as a college. Mr. Alison removed to Philadelphia and took charge of an académé which subsequently became a college, now the University of Pennsylvania, and he was appointed the Vice-Provost. Hence the Synod of Philadelphia or Old Side established no college of its own.

The Synod of New York or the New Side was as zealous for the promotion of learning as for the advancement of religion. We have seen how the love of learning manifested itself in New England and also in Virginia. The Scotch inherited their love of learning from the days of the Reformation, for their Book of Discipline, adopted by their first General Assembly at its meeting in 1561, stated that "it was imperatively necessary that there should be a school in every parish, for the instruction of youth in the principles of religion, grammar and the Latin tongue; and it was farther proposed that a college should be erected in every 'notable town,' in which logic and rhetoric should be taught, along with the learned languages." And the patrimony of the church was appropriated to three objects, the support of the *ministers*, the *schools* and the *poor*.

It has been observed that in the establishment of all our early colleges it was *a desire to raise up an educated ministry* that animated their founders.

This was so in the case of Harvard, of William and Mary, of Yale, and of the College of New Jersey. In the early history of New Jersey allusion is made to feelings of jealousy and even of unkindness between the Scotch and the English. This was not a question of nationality but of religion. By "English" are meant those who were attached to the Church of England as by law established, for between those who came from New England and those who came from Scotland there was entire accord, and Independents and Presbyterians had united in one religious body as they agreed in doctrine. While there was, of course, complete religious freedom, yet dissenters were not so much favored in public matters. There had been Presbyterian Governors, but they had attended the worship of the church of England. This was the case with Campbell and the Hamiltons, both father and son. It was not until 1746 that a charter for a college could be obtained in this colony by dissenters. The time had now come for success. The Presbytery of New Brunswick was particularly interested in "the Log College." Moreover by the great activity of its prominent members in connection with the revival, they were not in favor with the royal Governor, Lewis Morris, and "the Court party." Hence the work of devising measures for the establishment of a college devolved upon the ministers and laymen of the Presbytery of New York, most of whom lived in East Jersey, men of the highest reputation for wisdom, learning and piety. They had fortunately escaped the unfavorable opinion of the

Governor and his friends. These men were Dickinson, Pierson, Pemberton, Burr and others. Their first petition, for a charter, however, was rejected; it may be because Gov. Morris thought he had no right to grant a charter, or it may have been because they were Dissenters. He died in May 1746, and John Hamilton, son of Andrew Hamilton, Governor of East and West Jersey under the proprietors 1692-1702, became acting Governor for the second time. The petition for the establishment of a college was renewed, and a charter was granted by the Governor with the consent of his Council without asking the consent of the Provincial Assembly or the permission of his Majesty's Home Government.

The only record in the Archives of the Colony of this most important transaction is in the following words: "Mem. of a Charter for a Colledge. A charter to incorporate sundry persons to found a colledge passed the great seal of this province of New Jersey, tested by John Hamilton, Esq., President of His Majesty's Council and Commander-in-Chief of the Province of New Jersey, the 22d of Oct. 1746."

This charter was never recorded, and was subsequently supplanted by the more liberal charter granted by Governor Belcher, Sept. 13, 1748. For this he was styled "the founder, patron and benefactor" of the College. The history of this first charter and the relations between it and the second charter have been most ably discussed by ex-President Maclean in his History of the College of New Jersey. Into the matter of the second charter and

the great services of Governor Belcher I do not enter at this time. I cannot, however, mention the name of Dr. Maclean without alluding to the warm affection which all we old graduates and friends of Nassau Hall entertain for him, and particularly expressing our gratitude for his admirable History of the College.

The design of this College was that it might be a "seminary of piety and good literature," to furnish the Church with a pious and learned ministry and to provide liberally for the intellectual culture of all classes of youth who desired a liberal education. It was not a State Institution, nor was it ecclesiastical. It was under Presbyterian control; but was characterized by that wise liberality and catholic spirit that have ever been the glory of the Church of which we form a part.

And now having obtained a charter where was this College to be located, and who should be placed at the head of it? Your city, then a small town, but one of the most important places in the colony, had the honor of sheltering the infant college, and the eminent pastor of your church was selected as its first President. In the New York *Weekly Post Boy*, No. 211, February 2, [Old Style, 13 New Style], 1746, appeared the following:

"Whereas a Charter, with full and ample Privileges, has been granted by his Majesty under the Seal of the Province of New Jersey, bearing date the 22d October, 1746, for erecting a College within the said Province, to Jonathan Dickinson, John Pierson,

Ebenezer Pemberton and Aaron Burr, Ministers of the Gospel and some other Gentlemen, as Trustees of said College ; by which Charter equal Liberties and Privileges are secured to every Denomination of Christians, any different religious Sentiments notwithstanding. The said Trustees have therefore thought proper to inform the Public that they design to open the said College the next Spring ; and to notify to any Person or Persons who are qualified by preparatory Learning for Admission, that some time in May next at latest, they may be there admitted to an Academic Education."

In the same paper, No. 222, April 20, 1747, appeared :

" This is to inform the Public, That the Trustees of the College of New Jersey have appointed the Rev. Mr. Jonathan Dickinson PRESIDENT of said College, which will be opened the fourth Week in May next, at Elizabethtown ; At which time and Place, all Persons suitably qualified, may be admitted to an Academic Education."

At the appointed time and in this place, began the first term of the College of New Jersey. Who, now, was this Rev. Jonathan Dickinson who had been selected for the responsible position of President of the infant College ?

Jonathan Dickinson was of English descent. His grandfather, Nathaniel Dickinson, was one of the first settlers of Wethersfield, Conn. His son Hezekiah was born at Wethersfield, but resided at Stratford, where he married Abigail, granddaughter

of the Rev. Adam Blackman, the first minister of Stratford, Conn., and a graduate of Oxford. The parents of Jonathan Dickinson resided successively at Hatfield, Hadley and Springfield, Mass. He was born at Hatfield, April 22, 1688, but passed most of his youth at Springfield, and possibly spent sometime with his maternal grandfather Blackman, at Stratford; and probably through the influence of the next minister of that town, the Rev. Israel Chauncy, one of the founders of Yale College, he entered that institution in 1702, the very year of its foundation, under the Rev. Abraham Pierson, who instructed the students at his house at Killingworth; although the Commencements were held at Saybrook. His father died shortly after young Dickinson's graduation, which took place in 1706. He studied theology and was licensed to preach the Gospel. He came to Elizabeth in 1708, his attention having probably been turned in this direction by President Pierson, who had been pastor of the church in Newark from 1672 to 1692, having been the colleague and successor of his father. Mr. Dickinson was ordained, Sept. 29, 1709, by the ministers of Fairfield County, Conn., who had formed a Consociation on the Saybrook Platform just twenty days before. There were other ministers who took part in the ordination; besides, "messengers," i. e. elders from the different churches were present. The Rev. Joseph Morgan, who had just been installed pastor at Freehold, N. J., preached the sermon from Mark 16: 16: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

The sermon is still extant, a copy being preserved in the Library of the Connecticut Historical Society at Hartford. The first Presbytery of our church was formed in 1705, and Mr. Morgan became a member in 1710. Mr. Dickinson was not twenty-one years old when he began to preach in this town, and he was but little more than twenty-one when he was ordained. His field was very extensive. To show how large were the charges in those days, I may mention that Mr. Dickinson's field of labor embraced what is now Rahway, Westfield, Connecticut Farms, Springfield and part of Chatham besides Elizabethtown itself. Arduous and onerous as were his duties, he proved equal to them, and was diligent and faithful in the performance of them. Population was sparse, and in neither province of New Jersey was there any church or even minister west of him. As to his compensation, we learn that in each of the townships of Newark, Elizabethtown and Woodbridge in 1716, there was "a large Independent Congregation who support their preachers with the allowance of £80 per annum, besides House, Glebe and perquisites of Marriages."

He united with the Presbytery of Philadelphia, probably at their meeting in Woodbridge, April 29, 1717, when he took part in the ordination of Mr. John Pierson. This Presbytery was gradually absorbing all the churches and pastors of New England origin outside of New England, and Sept. 17, 1717, it met at Philadelphia as the Synod of Philadelphia. And the next year, Sept. 19, 1718, he delivered to

the Synod the first contribution ever made by this church for Presbyterial purposes. In 1720 he was made a member of the Standing Commission just appointed. In 1721 he was elected Moderator of the Synod, when for the first time this church was represented in Synod by an elder. The records of the Synod abundantly prove his activity in all ecclesiastical matters, and his name appears on almost every commission of importance. He and others at this time protested against an act of the Synod which they thought claimed too great power for the body. But in 1721 they withdrew their protest and presented a paper drawn up by Mr. Dickinson, which conceded all that our Church has ever claimed as to discipline, worship and the right of appeal, thus showing that the protest had arisen from a misconception. The Synod was universally pleased and unanimously joined in a thanksgiving prayer, and joyful singing of the 133d Psalm. Circumstances in this town and especially in Connecticut, in 1722, induced Mr. Dickinson to publish a "Defence of Presbyterian Ordination," in reply to a pamphlet in favor of Prelacy. The controversy that sprang up continued for some time, and the pamphlets on either side were collected into small volumes.

When it was proposed in the Synod to require of every minister and candidate a hearty assent to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, Mr. Dickinson opposed it. He did this, not because he did not accept the doctrines taught therein, but because he was opposed to all creeds of human com-

position. The discussion that ensued greatly agitated the church, but finally led to the famous "Adopting Act." The Synod was unanimous, and Mr. Dickinson was one of those who unanimously agreed in giving thanks to God in solemn prayer and praises for "that unanimity, peace, and unity, which appeared in all the consultations and determinations relating to the affair of the Confessions." He was at this time confessedly "the ablest man and most influential member of the Synod," and yet he stood almost alone in his peculiar views. But he modified his own views in accordance with those of his brethren. And he was present at what may be called the renewal or explanation of this act in 1736. He was again Moderator in 1742, when he and others protested against the exclusion of the Presbytery of New Brunswick without trial, and he also bore testimony to the evangelical character of the great revival then going on in many congregations. He was very earnest in his efforts to effect a reconciliation between the Presbytery and the Synod, but found it impossible. After struggling for five years to restore peace and harmony, he at last united with those who had been aggrieved in forming the Synod of New York, which was constituted in this church, Sept. 19, 1745. Mr. Dickinson was chosen Moderator, and the Synod adopted the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Larger and Shorter Catechism as the Synod of Philadelphia had done in 1729. In the new Synod, as in the old, he was the most influential member, the acknowledged leader.

We have thus briefly glanced at his position in the Church. Let us consider him as an author. He lived at a time when skepticism was prevalent among educated men, and when the love of many for the truth even in the Church had waxed cold. Reason was exalted, the Inspiration of the Bible was denied, its glorious revelations were neglected. He preached a series of discourses to his people in defence of the truth against prevalent errors. These were published in a volume entitled, "The Reasonableness of Christianity." They treated of the Being and Attributes of God, the Apostasy of Man, the Credibility of the Christian Religion and the Divinity of Christ. This volume is admirable in matter and in style. His first publication was his sermon before the Synod when retiring from the position of Moderator in 1722, "On Church Legislative Power." His "Defence of Presbyterian Ordination" in 1724 has already been alluded to. He was again involved in the Episcopal Controversy through no fault of his, and preached and published in 1736 his "famed sermon" on "The Vanity of human Institutions in the Worship of God." The Controversy was closed by him in 1738, by his "Reasonableness of non-Conformity." Numerous sermons and pamphlets need not be noticed. His tract upon the great revival under Whitfield, published at first anonymously, produced a great effect. Its very title shows its exhaustive character : "A Display of God's special Grace, in A familiar Dialogue Between a Minister and a Gentleman of his Congregation About the Work of God in

the Conviction and Conversion of Sinners, so remarkably of late begun and going on in these American Parts: wherein The Objections against some uncommon Appearances amongst us are distinctly consider'd, mistakes rectify'd and the Work itself particularly prov'd to be from the Holy Spirit With An Addition, in a second Conference, relating to sundry Antinomian Principles, beginning to obtain in some Places," 1742. It has been compared favorably in ability and character with the writings of Edwards upon the same subjects. The name of the author soon became known and it received the strongest commendation of the leading Congregational clergymen of Boston and the most prominent ministers of the Presbyterian Church.

In 1743 and 1744, he published Sermons upon Regeneration, and in 1745 his "Familiar Letters to a Gentleman upon A Variety of Seasonable and Important Subjects in Religion." In 1741 he published his ablest and most noted work, "The True Scripture Doctrine Concerning some important Points of Christian Faith; Particularly, Eternal Election, Original Sin, Grace in Conversion, Justification by Faith, And the Saint's Perseverance." So admirable and practical is this work, that it is upon the Catalogue of our Board of Publication to this day. At the very close of his life he was engaged in defending the doctrines of Grace, and his "Second Vindication of God's Sovereign Free Grace," was published from his MS., after his death, by his brother. Such was he as an author and a theolo-

gian; confessedly the ablest in the Presbyterian Church at the time of his death. And even in Great Britain it was acknowledged that "the British Isles had produced no such writers on Divinity in the Eighteenth Century, as Dickinson and Edwards."

In Church Courts he was ever a leader. Familiar with the rules of procedure, he conducted most wisely his side of the great controversies in which he was engaged in the church. Firm where he felt that he was right, yielding with grace when convinced that he was wrong, seeking some method of reconciling conflicting views, his sagacity inspiring confidence and his calm judgment securing respect, and even his firm adherence to his views giving no offence to his opponents, he secured the enthusiastic admiration of his friends, and all who knew him seemed to love the man.

As a preacher, he was a man of great power; his sermons were doctrinal, with, however, special application to the conditions of his hearers and the character of the times. Both the matter of his sermons, their literary excellence and the manner of his delivery, secured and retained the attention of his audience. He was often called upon for special sermons, and he delighted in assisting his brother ministers. Not only in the Church courts was he a counsellor; but ministers and churches generally, were wont to seek his advice in their troubles.

As a pastor he was faithful to his flock, and gained most intimate access to his people as a physician of their bodies as well as of their souls. For

to his many other accomplishments he added that of a knowledge of medicine, and actually practised the profession, gaining considerable reputation, and even publishing upon the subject. He was also active in promoting missionary labor among the Indians. With Pemberton and Burr, he represented their condition to "The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge," formed in England in 1709. These three were authorized to employ missionaries, which they did; Azariah Horton being the first, and David Brainard the second. Brainard found in Mr. Dickinson a warm friend and faithful counsellor, and they were much attached during life. Some have even attributed the founding of the College of New Jersey to the unjust expulsion of Brainard from Yale College, and the refusal to restore him at the solicitation of Edwards and Dickinson, when he had properly acknowledged his fault.

This then was the man who was selected to preside over the infant College. This imperfect and hasty sketch will enable you to judge whether he was competent for the new duties assigned him. He did not assume even these without preparation. Like his predecessors in the pastorate of this church, he had also for years taught a classical school or had at least received young men into his house to fit them for the ministry. Thus he was thoroughly prepared in all respects for his duties as President of a College.

The first term of the College of New Jersey began in Elizabethtown in May, 1747, at Mr. Dickin-

son's house on the South side of the old Rahway road and directly West of Race street. Tradition says that the College was subsequently transferred to the building that occupied the site of the present Lecture-room of this First Presbyterian Church. The pupils who had been under the previous instruction of President Dickinson formed the nucleus, for within one year from the opening of the College there were six students prepared to receive their first degree in the arts. President Dickinson was probably assisted by Mr. Caleb Smith who had been teaching here and studying theology under him. Mr. Smith was licensed to preach in April, 1747, just at the time Mr. Dickinson was chosen President. He was an excellent scholar and became pastor of Newark Mountains, now Orange, in 1748.

President Dickinson had only the honor of laying the foundations of the College, for he was cut off by pleurisy, Oct. 7, 1747, after an administration of only five months. The students, said to have been twenty in number, removed to Newark and were placed under the instruction of the Rev. Aaron Burr. The first class, consisting of Enos Ayres, Benjamin Chestnut, Hugh Henry, Israel Reed, Richard Stockton and Daniel Thane, was ready for graduation in May, 1748; but at the request of Gov. Belcher and the gentlemen associated with him who desired to have the honor of sending forth the first class, their graduation was repeatedly postponed until the new and more liberal charter was granted. Mr. Burr was elected President; he was inaugurated

and the first commencement was held at Newark, Nov. 9, 1748. All the members of the first class save one became ministers of the Gospel, and Richard Stockton was a signer of the Declaration of Independence, while Enos Ayres was also distinguished in civil life. The subsequent history of the College and its final removal to Princeton do not belong to this discourse.

President Dickinson was noted for the warmth of his piety and the strength of his devotional feelings. With an unblemished character, after a life of consistency and purity, he passed away just as he had reached the acme of his career, when the promise of years of usefulness seemed before him. With assured confidence he remarked, "Many days have passed between God and my soul, in which I have solemnly dedicated myself to Him, and I trust what I have committed to Him He is able to keep until that day," and then passed away. Buried among his flock, his monument is with you unto this day. "He was," as Dr. Hatfield, in his excellent History, remarks, "by common consent, the greatest man whose name adorns the Annals of the town."

Over the tomb of Sir Christopher Wren in St. Paul's Cathedral in London is this inscription :

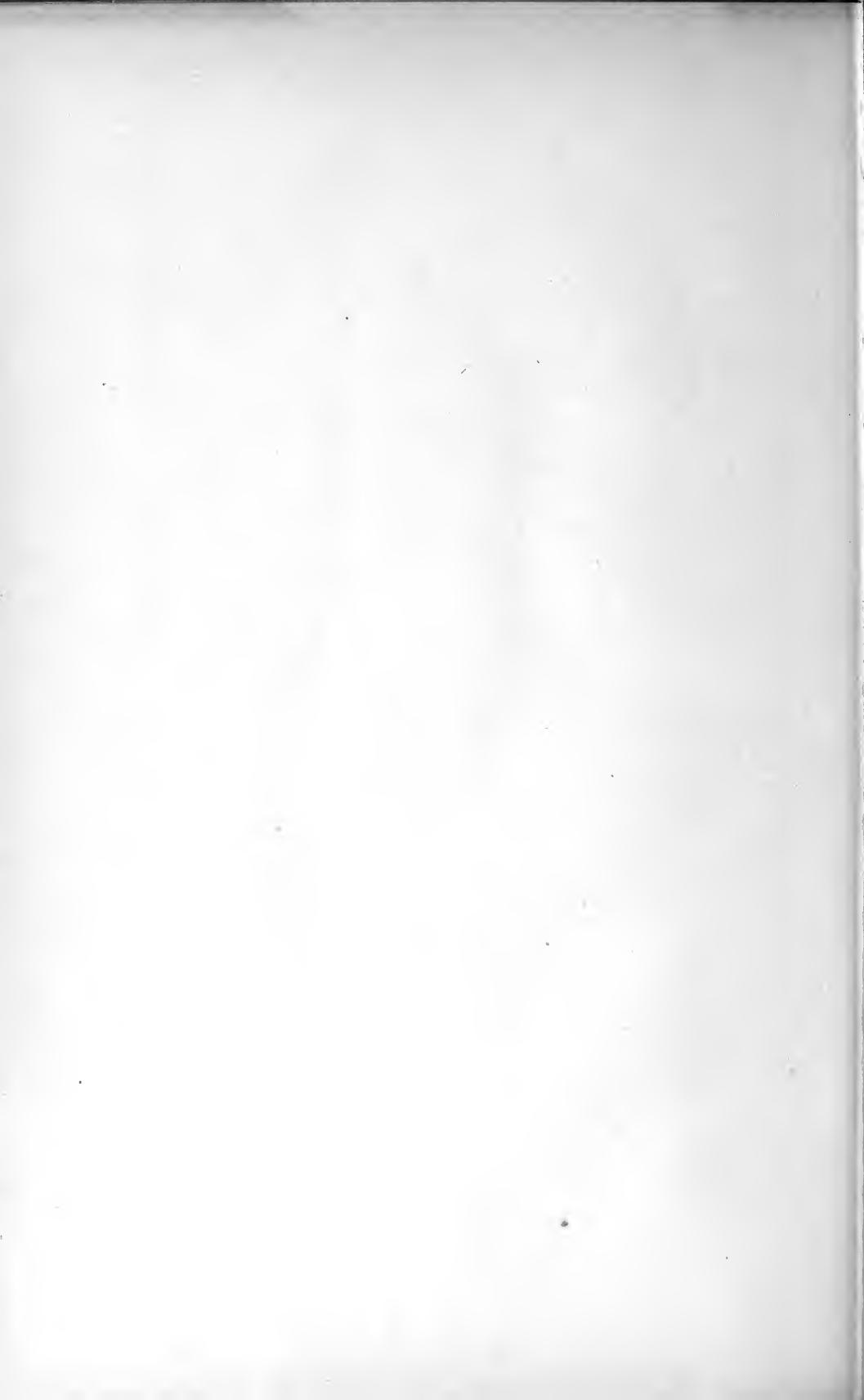
"SI MONUMENTUM REQUIRIS, CIRCUMSPICE."

So with Jonathan Dickinson ; his monument is not simply the stone above his remains in the adjoining cemetery. Look around you in this church, in this town, in the college over which he presided and which has now been transferred to another place.

The Rev. Caleb Smith married his daughter Martha, the youngest of his nine children by his first wife, Joanna Melyen. One of his descendants through this daughter, Mr. John C. Green, whom God blessed with abundant wealth, reared to this eminent man Dickinson Hall at Princeton which commemorates the name of his great ancestor and illustrates his own enlightened Christian liberality. In this descendant of Jonathan Dickinson, Nassau Hall has found her greatest benefactor, whose gifts will spread blessings through countless years. Wherever the influence of Princeton extends, whether at the bar where right is protected, or on the bench where justice is dispensed ; in the Senate where laws are enacted or on the field of battle where liberty is defended ; or in the church where the gospel is proclaimed with truth and power there will the name of its first President be honored. To Dickinson be honor ; to his descendant do we owe thanks ; but to God be the glory for the noble work which Nassau Hall has accomplished : and may she continue in the discharge of the duty to which God has called her until He shall come whose right it is to reign !













LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 028 333 591 4